



Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

Twenty-first session

Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 13–17 November 2023

Agenda items 5 and 7

Progress report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD

Policy frameworks and thematic topics: sand and dust storms, drought, land tenure and gender

Conclusions and recommendations on agenda items 5 and 7

I. Follow-up on the progress report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD

1. All Parties reiterated that droughts are closely linked to other environmental challenges with far-reaching impacts on people and ecosystems and stressed the importance of effective drought mitigation.
2. The Parties expressed their sincere appreciation to members of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on Drought and to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) secretariat for the work accomplished so far.
3. Some Parties suggested the need to narrow down the policy options presented by the IWG in their progress report submitted to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.
4. Some Parties expressed that the focus should be on policy options within the mandate of the Convention and where the Convention can make the strongest contribution to proactive drought management.
5. Some Parties highlighted the importance of these policy options being fleshed out and developed in a way that would contribute to the effective implementation of an integrated and proactive approach.
6. Some Parties proposed that the IWG could focus on two options, one being legally binding and other non-legally binding.
7. Regarding the draft evaluation methodology proposed in the report, some Parties considered it appropriate because, taking into account the level of detail available for the options and the level of uncertainty in their impact, a qualitative evaluation scheme would ensure more objectivity than a quantitative one. Furthermore, they indicated that a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis seemed to be an adequate way of presenting the results of the evaluation, making it easy to understand and interpret for all UNCCD Parties.



8. Some Parties recommended that the policy options should be considered as complementary and not mutually exclusive. In particular, the policy option on financing should not be considered as an independent option but as an integral part of all the other options.
9. Some Parties stressed the need to focus on financing, capacity-building, technology, and knowledge transfer, especially for developing countries.
10. Some Parties advised the IWG to further evaluate the options based on the likelihood of success, political will available globally, timeliness, and the ability of each option to enhance drought resilience.
11. A few Parties suggested that the IWG include a specific target on drought and a dedicated financial instrument and/or financial support for the implementation of the target.
12. Some Parties suggested focusing on existing mechanisms instead of developing a new one, as using existing mechanisms is more cost-effective and efficient, while others stressed that a dedicated funding mechanism would contribute to the successful implementation of the Convention's drought-related work.
13. Some Parties also highlighted the need to align the work of the IWG with the ongoing activities under existing targets, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as to consider other initiatives such as the G20 Global Land Initiative and the International Drought Resilience Alliance.
14. Some Parties underscored the need for integrated and proactive drought management and governance, paying particular attention to sustainable land management, and some Parties further underscored sustainable water management, land restoration and nature-based solutions.
15. Parties also stressed that close coordination and cooperation with other processes and institutions and building partnerships at all levels will be essential for the effective implementation of any of the options.
16. Many Parties highlighted the importance of cross-sectoral, multisectoral, multilevel and whole-of-government approaches as very effective mechanisms to address drought mitigation, preparedness and response.
17. Some Parties expressed the need to establish a drought framework or programme in view of drawing attention to drought-related issues in an integrated manner while also addressing issues of synergies among the three Rio conventions.
18. Some Parties stressed that only a clearly articulated legally binding global policy instrument on drought would provide guidance to Parties in their implementation of drought initiatives at all levels.
19. Many Parties recommended building on existing initiatives, programmes and agreements, given the need for rapid and immediate action to achieve drought resilience.
20. A few Parties mentioned that the option to develop a new instrument outside the Convention has the potential to create regime conflict and incoherence with the mandate of the Convention.
21. Some Parties acknowledged that negotiating a legally binding instrument might take time, depending on the willingness of Parties, however it is better to invest in more efforts to seek a long-lasting solution than take shortcuts that will not yield required results in addressing drought at a global level.
22. Some Parties stated that the IWG on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the Convention is the appropriate forum for substantial discussions on policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the UNCCD. They indicated that they would not express an opinion about any of the options at this point, as the IWG was established precisely to compile and assess them, and they would like to refrain from making comments in this regard until the group has finished its work and presented its findings and recommendations.

23. Some Parties expressed that the options, especially about drought, are very complex issues that need more time and more discussions to be considered.
24. Further, some Parties stressed the need to establish synergies with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements like the Convention on Biological Diversity, where protocols have been established under an agreed treaty.
25. Some Parties stressed that a step-by-step approach might be more promising. The first step should be drought-related agreements at regional level, which can be expanded to a global agreement.
26. Many Parties also stressed the importance of designing approaches and solutions that promote gender equality, as well as the appropriate involvement of civil society organizations and the private sector.
27. Some Parties stated that an objective and unbiased assessment of the options based on the best scientific and technical information available would be paramount for the credibility of the work of this group.
28. Civil society organizations suggested that governments should regulate land use, support sustainable land management, and avoid rewarding excessive stocking or destructive tillage with drought relief funds.
29. The co-chair of the IWG, in response to the interventions by Parties, stated that the IWG will take into consideration the comments and suggestions to the next IWG meeting due to be held from 18 to 20 November 2023 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

II. Follow-up on policy frameworks and thematic issues: drought

30. Acknowledging the information contained in document ICCD/CRIC(21)/9, many Parties welcomed the work by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism within the thematic area of drought.
31. Many Parties recognized that the need is growing for targeted policies, effective collaboration and increased investments on drought preparedness, response, and recovery measures with a particular focus on developing countries that have been hit by drought in recent years.
32. Some Parties encouraged the prioritization of drought resilience by implementing national drought policies that enhance integrated approaches and by recognizing its interlinkages with climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and restoration, agroforestry and agroecological practices, sustainable land management, sustainable development, and disaster risk reduction approaches. Some Parties also underlined the synergies between drought-smart land management practices, ecosystem restoration actions, and nature-based solutions.
33. Some Parties emphasized the focus on good land governance and the mainstreaming of gender issues into land governance to support and enhance drought resilience.
34. Some Parties drew attention to the importance of developing and implementing gender-responsive national drought plans.
35. Some Parties attributed success in preventing land degradation to “good land use decisions and sustainable land management.” This also provides an opening for the secretariat to continue its great work in helping countries produce whole-of-government sustainable land management plans to help build resilience to drought.
36. Some Parties expressed their strong support for the holistic approach, led and convened by the UNCCD, of working in close collaboration with other relevant processes and partners. They also emphasized the need for a continued integrated collaboration between the three Rio conventions and the need to strengthen the involvement of civil society.
37. Parties encouraged the development of the communities of learning and practice within the framework of the Drought Toolbox to pursue co-learning and collaboration on

drought risk reduction and resilience. Parties also emphasized that reliable data is imperative to ensure effective decision-making and action, and that capacity-building and knowledge exchange play a vital role in achieving this goal.

38. Some Parties suggested that the secretariat, the Global Mechanism and appropriate UNCCD institutions and bodies, including the Science-Policy Interface, support Parties in the further implementation of their national drought plans by building capacities on effective planning for drought management and the implementation of drought plans, including the integration of plans into land degradation neutrality and national action programmes, taking into consideration Indigenous peoples.

39. Some Parties highlighted that to date the Drought Initiative has only been undertaken in 1 of the 15 Pacific Island countries, despite their increased vulnerability. Some Parties urged targeted support be channelled to small island developing States, including dedicated programmes like the Drought Initiative

40. Some Parties suggested that the Global Mechanism continue in its endeavour to explore potential financing instruments for addressing drought, including insurance products and bonds, and to make available related information and guidance to facilitate the access of Parties to these instruments, taking into account the serious debt situation of developing countries and their consideration in this context.

41. Some Parties suggested to explore potential financing instruments for addressing drought with a cross-cutting approach, including funding opportunities within the frameworks of the other Rio conventions, and also to provide Parties with information and guidance to facilitate access to these instruments.

42. Many Parties encouraged development partners and financing institutions, in particular the Global Environment Facility, to support the implementation of national drought plans and policies.

43. Some Parties invited the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to reach out to the Green Climate Fund and other financial institutions to explore the possibility of financing projects and programmes which could lead to co-benefits in terms of improved drought resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and halting biodiversity loss. They invited the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to report on these possible partnerships and opportunities.

44. Many Parties expressed their support for the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to continue participating in the preparations for the High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy +10 that will take place in 2024 as a follow-up to the 2013 High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy.

45. Civil society organization representatives recommended strengthening links between drought, adaptation to climate change, sustainable development, and reduction of risks and disasters.
